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Sierra Tarascans

243 While crops are small, posts are placed in the fields to provide perching places for hawks.

Worms may damage small plants to the point that reseeding is necessary, especially if there are long periods of cloudy weather without rain. Worms also damage about 35 percent of the ears. Deer damage crops badly only in isolated mountain fields. Badgers in some places are serious pests. The only remedy is to attempt to shoot the animals. Birds do little damage. Some maize is attacked by a fungus. [262] The fungus is eaten, but it is not sold or prized as a delicacy as is the case in some parts of Mexico.

243 672 685 Trespass by domestic animals and theft must be guarded against. Sometimes isolated fields are completely stripped if not watched. Stray animals caught damaging corn are taken to the *municipio* and held in jail until the owner pays for the damage.

243 [132] Unseasonal frost often damages corn, particularly late plantings and in fields at high altitudes. In 1940, frost, heavy enough to damage some fields, occurred on September 29.

When maize is about 1 foot high it is cultivated (*"escorda"* also *"trozando"*) by running the plow between the rows, throwing dirt toward the plants. This is done a second time when the plants are about 18 inches tall. If it is delayed too long, the roots may be cut, the maize leaves will yellow at the tip, and no ears will form.

When the maize is in tassel, after the rainy season is well underway, the fields are weeded *"chaponeado."* [412] This is done by hand with a short machete, called *"os,"* with a sharp curve at the point. Also, earth is piled around such plants as were not sufficiently covered by the cultivation. If the weeds are bad, a second weeding is sometimes done, but not often. If weeding is omitted, weeds climb high up the stalks and the crop suffers considerably. The weeds removed are piled up beside the fields and are not used for feed or fertilizer.

243 221 674 As soon as grain is well formed on the ears, some maize is used for food, usually roasted. At this time, also, guards must be set in the fields, not only to keep animals out, but to prevent theft. Whole families may move to temporary field shelters at this time and remain until the harvest. In the "plains," usually

243 only a few watchers are necessary. A pine
221 tree some 20 feet high is trimmed and set
674 firmly in the ground. The watchers climb this and spend hours standing uncomfortably in the crotches left by trimming the branches. Often several families may cooperate in watching, or several landowners may hire watchers, called *veladores*.

243 When the ears are well formed, but while
246 stalks and leaves are still green, fodder ("*rastrojo*") is cut. All stalks without ears, and the ear-bearing stalks above the ears, are cut, dried, carried to the house, and stored in sheds. This forms the principal fodder for animals. The stalks remaining in the field are not cut after the harvest, but animals are allowed to graze the harvested fields.

243 The main work of harvesting is done by men.
[462] Women bring food to the men, and they also glean, assisted by children. At harvest each man takes two rows at a time. The ears are picked, husked, and thrown in a round cane-
[482] splint burden basket (ăundis) carried on the
[285] back with the aid of a tumpline. Ears which miss the basket belong to the gleaners, who also take the nubbins. When the basket is filled, the corn is piled at convenient spots.

243 The harvest is the busiest time of year.
464 Except for a few specialists, the sick, and the
466 infirm, everyone works, either on his own harvest or as a laborer for someone else. Labor also comes from other towns. Wages are 40 to 50 centavos a day, plus the right to glean. Women and children follow the men of their own household and close supervision is necessary in order to prevent too many ears from being dropped or overlooked. The workday is about 7 hours. The larger landowners have tried unsuccessfully to eliminate gleaning by raising wages to 1 peso a day. Men refused to work without gleaning rights, despite the opinion of most objective observers that the maize secured from gleaning had less value than the additional wages. The landowners would have saved through eliminating supervisors. When the harvest is over, some farmers treat all their help to a few drinks of *aguardiente* (căránda).

243 Most of the harvest is carried to town and
492 the storehouses on burros. Nets are used to
[493] hold the ears. Sometimes other animals are used, and for some fields employment of two-wheeled oxcarts is possible, although they are rarely used.

441 Women are believed to be more resistant to the illnesses of
439 *tierra caliente*, and tales are told of women who
[927] saved their husbands by nursing them or by bringing them back to the healthful highlands. For this reason, traders rarely go alone, although large parties are rare. The major
[641] disease appears to be malaria. Insects, especially one attacking the feet, are mentioned as a great bother.

Robbers are also a source of danger; how-
[674] ever, the most traveled route—that to Guerrero —is said to be entirely safe. Some of the greatest dangers on the route to Coalcomán or Colima seem to have been in Tarascan territory. The village of Capacuaro had a particularly evil reputation at one time.

[492] Goods are ordinarily transported by burros. A poor man may have to carry goods on his back. The *arrieros* never ride except when
[497] seriously ill. An exception is that journeys to
[494] Celaya are made on the train, while nearby trips may sometimes be made by bus since construction of the highway.

The first step in a trading expedition is the assembling of goods for the trip. These may consist of pears from Cherán; apples from Pichataro; wooden products (*"tornillo"*) from Paracho; sweetpotatoes from San Francisco; fine pottery (not cooking ware) from La Cañada, Guadalajara, or Quiroga; oils and spices from Pátzcuaro; dolls, pottery, and other goods from Celaya. Most of the goods carried by Cherán traders, however, are local in origin, i.e., within the Tarascan area. In such cases, trade goods either are assembled by one or more short preliminary purchasing trips or are bought en route. Guadalajara pottery requires a 7- or 8-day trip each way with burros. Celaya goods, as stated, involve a trip by train.

On the return trip various products are brought. From Guerrero come dried fish, dried beef, gourds, gourd containers, coconuts, and cheese, the last being most important. Few data were obtained on the products brought from Coalcomán, as few Cherán traders make this trip, but cheese and dried beef are probably the most important items. However, the one trader to give specific information bought beeswax. Chiles are brought from Colima.

Generally the goods brought back are not sold until Cherán is reached. Then they are

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Civil wedding—Domingo Hernández, a "grandfather."
Church wedding—Doña Feliciana.

According to report, Doña Feliciana provided only a new *rebozo* for the bride in the way of clothing, but this was not verified. No data were secured on who paid for the liquor.

The church wedding took place about 7 a. m. on January 9, this being the cheaper hour. The bride was returned to her home, then brought with her relatives to the groom's mother's house for breakfast. After breakfast, the party went to the municipal offices for the civil registry. This order was quite incorrect, as customarily the civil registry should precede the religious ceremony, usually by about a week. After this, matters proceeded as usual with the dinner. The older brother of the groom functioned as the male head of the household. Had the groom had no older brother, Doña Feliciana would have had to discharge the functions of the male head; none of her brothers or those of her deceased husband would have taken this position.

Late in the afternoon a number of poles were brought into the courtyard. Stuck in holes in these poles were many small sticks to which were attached small flaglike ornaments of paper of many colors which were divided among the women and children with a great deal of shouting and disorder (pl. 7, lower left). These banners are not produced at any other time than the period preceding Carnival.

The crownlike breads were not produced until quite late, about 4:30 p. m., and were not distributed until some time later (pl. 7, upper right). In turn, the dancing was late in starting in the groom's house, although it began some time earlier in the house of the grandfather entertaining that group.

Just before dusk the priest arrived and scolded the party for getting drunk. One of the men who took this to heart started home; he was shot and killed while crossing the bridge to Parícutin by an unknown enemy, but none of these events stopped the wedding, which turned into one of the most prolonged large-scale drinking bouts occurring during the time of the study. Atole was served at midnight, while between 4 and 6 a. m. and again at 8 a. m. *posole* was served. The atole was provided by

[674]